amendments to claims 1 and 8 render moot the rejections based on the Hawie, Garrison, and Cameron references, taken alone or in combination.

In particular, the Applicant hereby amends claims 1 and 8 to include a stop projection formed on at least one of the clip member and the collar member. The stop projection allows the clip member to extend through the collar member for movement between the first and second positions but inhibits inadvertent movement of the collar member relative to the clip member beyond the first position in a direction from the second position towards the first position. The stop projection thus prevents the collar member from becoming disengaged from the clip member during normal use of the clip assembly or method of the present invention.

None of the cited references discloses, teaches, or suggests a stop projection as recited in claims 1 and 8. FIG. 5 of the Hawie reference illustrates that the actuating sleeve 12 of that device may freely slide off of the gripping member 10 thereof without the additional use of the attaching loop 11. As is apparent in FIGS. 3 and 4 of the Cameron reference, until a strap 32 is attached to the opposable jaws 36a and 36b, the collar 40 of the Cameron device may easily fall off of the jaws 36a and 36b. The Garrison reference 4,194,274 is not a clip assembly and thus does not in any way disclose, teach, or suggest a stop projection to hold a collar onto a clip. The Hawie, Garrison, and Cameron references thus in no way disclose, teach, or suggest the structure of a clip assembly having a stop projection as recited in claims 1 and 8.

The stop projection may be integrally formed with either the collar member or, as shown, the clip member, allowing the claimed clip assembly to be made of inexpensive, easy to fabricate parts, such as by injection-molded plastic. The individual parts may be quickly and easily assembled at the factory, shipped, displayed, and used without fear that the collar member will become separated from the clip member.

Given the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 8 are structurally distinguishable from, and superior in operation to, the devices disclosed in the cited Hawie, Garrison, and Cameron references. The Applicant thus respectfully submits that claims 1 and 8 are allowable over the cited references, and such allowance is respectfully requested. Claims 2-4, 6, 7, and 9-13 further define claims 1 or 8 and should thus also be in condition for allowance.

The Applicant has further taken this opportunity to correct an editing error in claim 11.

Submitted herewith is a document (entitled Exhibit A - Listing of All Claims and Amendments (10/28/2005)) containing a listing of the claims as currently presented. The attached Listing contains the text of each pending claim, along with any amendments made hereby (illustrated using strikethrough and underlining) and the status of each pending claim.

Given the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully submits that currently pending claims 1-4 and 6-14 are in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested. If there is any matter which could be expedited by consultation with the Applicant's attorney, such would be welcome. The Applicant's attorney can normally be reached at the telephone number below.

Signed at Bellingham, County of Whatcom, State of Washington this 28th day of October, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,

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